ETS2 and the Halving of Car Journeys: An Extended Analysis

First published online: 1 July 2026

This article is an extended version of Part 5 of an independent critical study examining the EU Emissions Trading System 2 (ETS2) — a policy effective from 2028 that imposes a progressively increasing cost on fossil fuels through a system of emission allowances which must be auctioned by fuel suppliers and distributors, with the cost passed on to the consumer on top of the existing price of fuel. The allowances are to be fewer and dearer every year by design, with an annual cap tightening every year, until fossil fuels and everything that runs on them are eliminated out of existence in pursuit of carbon neutrality. The architects of this policy refer to it as a 'price signal.' In doing so, it intends to fundamentally restructure how people heat their homes and run their vehicles and for a significant portion of the population, whether they will be able to keep either. Public awareness of it in Ireland is, to the best of this study's knowledge, virtually nonexistent.

https://archive.org/details/ets-2-ireland-or-what-the-public-was-never-told_202608

Certain elements of the topic, and the interconnection between them, are not fully covered in the study this article is an extended part of. It has also been based on a widely held and uncorrected premise that electrification of cars should somehow mitigate the halving car journeys demand. This premise is so deeply ingrained that it was not detected by any of its adversarial reviews. The journey reduction target applies equally to electric vehicles. This article goes into greater detail of how it all works in practice, the instruments being used, how they relate to each other, and what their combined effect on the population amounts to. Altogether, this makes the argument even stronger than the original study's framing suggested.

In Brief

This article documents a set of measures being applied across Ireland whose combined effect is to make car ownership progressively unaffordable, impractical and ultimately untenable, so that keeping a car becomes more a burden than a practical choice. While its financial mechanism is ETS2, its physical mechanisms are the infrastructure changes documented here, road narrowing, cycling lanes, bus stop redesigns, navigation routing anomalies and traffic management decisions that consistently impede car use while presenting each measure in isolation as routine improvement.

The demand to halve car journeys that underlies all of this is not an EU mandate. It is an Irish government political choice, set out in the Climate Action Plan 2023 and the Dublin City Council Development Plan, layered on top of the EU mechanism without public debate or explicit consent. The connection between the financial pressure and the physical impediments is documented in official strategy but has never been presented to the public as a connected programme.

The public has been told neither, and therefore cannot object to something that, in any officially connected sense, does not exist.

5.1 Two Interpretations of the Same Target

The demand to halve car journeys stems from a combination of official targets communicated repeatedly across government and transport authority channels. Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2023, developed under then Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan, sets a target of a 50% reduction in transport sector emissions by 2030, with the Department of Transport repeatedly framing this as requiring a fundamental transformation of how Ireland travels. At city level the language is explicit: Dublin City Council's Development Plan commits to working with the National Transport Authority to halve private vehicle trips to Dublin by 2030. No other region was offered any exemption from equivalent targets. Taken together, these communications produced an impression that has

circulated widely and accurately: that car journeys in Ireland are expected to be halved. That impression is correct in its direction. A 50% cut in transport emissions from a sector that is 94% fossil fuel dependent implies, in the absence of mass electrification at the required scale and already demonstrated to be unachievable by 2030, a corresponding reduction in journeys. But the halving demand does not disappear with electrification. The vehicle kilometres travelled targets in CAP23 and Dublin City Council's Development Plan apply to all cars regardless of what powers them. Electrification changes the emissions calculation. It does not change the journey reduction demand. The widespread assumption that it would is what the preamble to this article addresses.

What that would mean in practice for individual households, whether urban or rural, whether with access to alternatives or without, is what this article examines.

Two interpretations are possible.

The first: the same number of cars on the road, each driven half as much. For households with access to public transport, short distances between destinations, and flexible working arrangements, this may be achievable, though whether it should be acceptable without explicit informed consent is a separate question. For households without those options, halving the journeys means halving the activities those journeys serve: working less, accessing healthcare less, participating in daily life less.

The second: half as many cars among the population altogether. For this to happen voluntarily, people would have to choose to give up car ownership, something that requires adequate alternatives, being adequate means they should be independent, flexible and affordable as the car. ETS2 provides the financial pressure against fossil fuel car use. It provides none for the alternatives.

Both scenarios would unfold simultaneously and the divide between them would fall largely along the line between urban and rural populations, each facing different pressures and different consequences. To understand which outcome is being actively steered toward, and by what means, it is worth examining the measures being progressively taken, the patterns they collectively produce, and which direction those patterns consistently point toward to.

5.2 The Measures

Fuel cost is not the only measure being applied. In many locations, cycling lanes are being installed and continue to spread wherever road space allows, and in many cases even where it does not, and in many cases where residents previously parked. Footpaths are being widened and corners at crossroads enlarged beyond any reasonable traffic safety justification, removing the ability to stop, pull in, or in places even park outside your own home or business, and in some cases reducing crossroads width to the point where two cars turning simultaneously can no longer pass each other, all without consultation or recourse. Owners of properties that had on-street parking available have no remedy when it disappears overnight. Reduced parking availability generally affects property values. The extent in any individual case is a question nobody in authority seemed to think worth examining. The state acknowledges no connection. Each measure is presented as routine infrastructure improvement. All of these measures share a common denominator: the impediment of traffic and car use by whatever means available.

One of the consequences of these infrastructure changes that appears nowhere in any planning document examined in the course of this study is the effect on emergency access. The roads in question are reduced to the point where two cars can just about pass each other in normal circumstances. What has been removed is the margin. A breakdown, a puncture, a minor accident, or any obstruction that would previously have been bypassable is now sufficient to create a complete blockage. Emergency vehicles may still be able to mount the footpath in some circumstances, but they may first have to get through a queue that would not have existed on the original road width, a queue held back by whatever obstruction caused the emergency in the first place. This is not theoretical. During the fuel protests recently, petrol stations that managed to receive any supply were immediately besieged, and the resulting queues blocked entire areas

because the road width that would have allowed traffic to pass around them had been removed. That this consequence is not mentioned, not assessed, and not mitigated in any of the documentation examined is consistent with the priority being applied throughout: the green transition and whatever comes with it takes precedence. The concerns and lives of the people who use these roads and pay the taxes that fund them are, at best, a secondary consideration.

This is being done against documented and widespread objections nationwide, for instance at Knockpogue Avenue in Cork where residents protested on site as work continued around them, in Skerries in Dublin where residents described plans as designed to make driving deliberately inconvenient, and on the Dublin quays where the council chief executive's response to objections, obtained by FOI, was: "I presume we will plough on." No national count of objections to specific schemes has been compiled. That absence is consistent with a pattern observable across various aspects of governance, where data that would confirm the scale of opposition is not being collected by those implementing the policies.

Small but Effective Impediments

A further category of instruments operates at a level of granularity that makes each individual instance dismissible as routine traffic management, to name just a few out of many. Yellow box junctions placed at locations where they were not before effectively eliminate right turns during busy hours, not by prohibiting them, but by ensuring the exit is never clear long enough to proceed without breaking the rule. It is worth noting that junctions like this remain passable in practice only because many drivers apply common sense and take possession of the road as they always have. The system accommodates both outcomes equally: if drivers comply, the junction is effectively blocked, which justifies further intervention. If they do not, they can be prosecuted. Either way, the system can have its way if it chooses to. The same effect is produced without a yellow box wherever roads have been narrowed sufficiently. Any right turn on a road reduced to the point where two cars can barely pass each other requires the turning vehicle to stop and wait, blocking all traffic behind it for the duration. No yellow box required. The narrowing alone achieves the same result. Pedestrian crossing intervals parametrised to maximise pedestrian green time hold traffic back beyond any reasonable safety requirement, worsening queues beyond what they would otherwise be, or creating them where none would otherwise form. Traffic light sequencing is another, where successive sets of lights are spaced and timed in such a way that by the time your green appears, the space ahead has already been filled by traffic released from other directions. You get green. You cannot move. You get red. The next light releases traffic across or against you, filling the space again. You get green again. The space is full again. This cycle repeats indefinitely. It is not accidental. Lights do not sequence this way without design choices being made. None of these measures prohibits driving. Each one makes it more difficult, more time-consuming, more liable and more infuriating. That is the point.

Deliberate Obstruction

The measures described below could, in terms of intent, belong to the previous category. The manner in which they have been carried out, and what they represent, warrants separate treatment.

The photographs below document two locations out of many where public money has been spent to ensure that every bus stopping at these stops becomes an obstacle to all traffic behind it, with no cycling lane present at either location as an excuse, and no justification offered or apparent.

At the first location, a bus stop that previously had a stopping bay allowing the bus to pull in off the road has had that bay deliberately filled in. The option to pull over without blocking traffic has been eliminated. Every time the bus stops, it halts in the road and blocks everything behind it. The original shelter remains exactly where it always was, a reminder of how this stop functioned before. The people waiting under the shelter which can no longer shelter them while they are boarding, the people in the cars held back behind the bus, and anyone who might ask why this was done, none of them agreed to this. None of them have recourse. None of them is relevant. Yet their taxes paid for it.

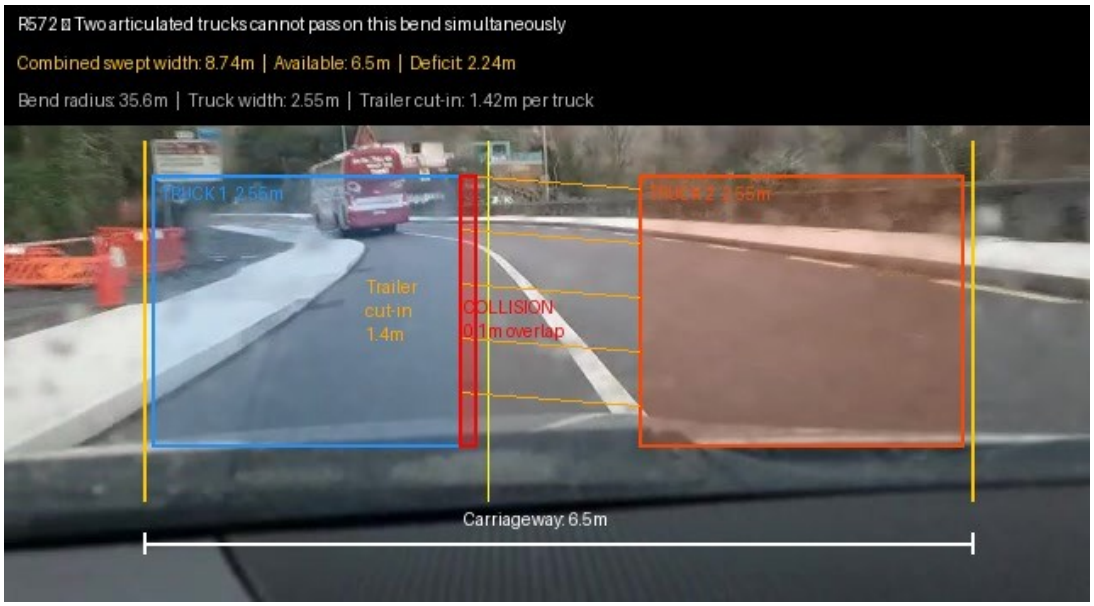
The second location requires less explanation. The road is wide, visibly and unmistakably wide. A bus could stop on either side before without obstructing a single vehicle in either direction. Instead, two raised platforms have been built facing each other, one on each side, protruding into the road from both directions simultaneously. New shelters were built alongside them. Should two buses arrive at the same time, the road would be blocked entirely, as a predictable consequence. There was no engineering problem to solve. There was one created. The road width makes that plain.

Nobody agreed to this. Nobody is accountable. Public money is being used to make things deliberately worse for the public, for those waiting for the bus, for those driving past it, and for anyone on that road whose life might one day depend on an emergency vehicle being able to get through, something neither a filled-in bay nor protruding platforms from both sides of the road makes any easier. Every bus stop rearranged in this manner is sending a message: this is what can be done to you now, and you cannot do anything about it because you do not matter. Every bus stop rearranged in this manner can serve as a monument to arrogance of power.

Black Spot

The following case documents that the obsession with footpath widening at the expense of traffic has little limits and even less scruples. The bend shown below is a documented example of what that obsession produces when applied without regard for consequence. A black spot has been created, where an accident is not a possibility but a matter of time.

The R572 at this location has been narrowed to 6.5 metres of usable carriageway to make room for footpaths that nobody affected was consulted about. Two articulated trucks cannot pass each other on this bend simultaneously as they could before. It is a geometrical impossibility now. Each truck needs more road on the bend than it does on the straight, and should they meet on the bend, together they need 2.24 metres more than is available.


R572 ⊠ Two articulated trucks cannot pass on this bend simultaneously
Combined swept width: 8.74m | Available: 6.5m | Deficit: 2.24m
Bend radius: 35.6m | Truck width: 2.55m | Trailer cut-in: 1.42m per truck
TRUCK 1 · 2.55m
Trailer cut-in 1.4m
COLLISION 0.1m overlap
Carriageway: 6.5m

This situation has existed for approximately three years. That no collision has occurred in that time is not evidence that the road is safe. It is evidence of the skill and anticipation of the drivers using it, drivers who read the bend, wait for oncoming traffic to clear at points where there was no need to wait before the footpaths were built, and manage a gap that should not exist.

This outcome was not accidental. The works that achieved this state of affairs were commenced in 2022 and completed in 2023 without a Section 38 traffic impact assessment, and this despite objections raised by a local councillor that the bend would no longer be passable by two articulated trucks simultaneously. It was confirmed by Cork County Council's own engineer that no such assessment was required, on the grounds that the scheme was classified as pedestrian connectivity rather than traffic calming. The source is cited below. By classifying it as such, Cork County Council exempted itself from the legal requirement to assess the traffic impact of works that demonstrably, measurably and on the record affected traffic to the point where articulated trucks can no longer pass each other on the bend. The problem the assessment would have found was never officially found. Which means it officially does not exist. Which means nobody is accountable.

All of this is happening in spite of the existence of a state agency which calls itself the Road Safety Authority, which has detailed opinions and requirements on a great many trivial matters, for example how a driver should hold and handle a wheel, but appears content to look the other way when a measurably hazardous situation is created and mislabelled as something commendable. This might be described as institutional hypocrisy with lethal stakes. An agency that would spare no indignation for any private actors creating a life endangering situation under a fig leaf of commendable excuse, while remaining silent when an institution does the same. Had publicans, for instance, reclassified alcohol as a commendable social connectivity measure and served it to drivers on that basis, the RSA would have had a great deal to say in righteous indignation. The reclassification of permanent road narrowing to the point that it is impassable by two articulated trucks at the same time as pedestrian connectivity achieves a more permanent and potentially far more damaging result by the same relabelling method. Intoxication wears off. A black spot, undesignated and unmarked as such, does not, and a factually correct excuse that regional roads do not fall under RSA remit does not make it acceptable or less objectionable. It calls itself the Road Safety Authority, not Some Road Safety Authority, and as such should be the first to object to this kind of carry on.

When the accident this bend is waiting for happens, it would be consistent with everything examined so far that the record will focus on driver failure. Speed will be questioned, and everything else down to details logically as frivolous and irrelevant to the matter as whether either driver had breached their mandatory rest requirements by a single minute within the preceding 28 days, but the footpaths and the deliberately narrowed carriageway will not. Everyone and everything will be blamed before those who set the stage for it to happen.

Also, this is the only road to the Beara Peninsula on the Cork side of the Caha Mountains that is passable for heavy goods vehicles. The R572 forms part of the Wild Atlantic Way and the Ring of Beara, two of Ireland's principal tourism routes, whose visitor traffic includes coaches and tour buses that use this road as their primary access. The alternative from Kenmare via the N71 adds 53 minutes of winding mountain road and passes through the Caha tunnel, which at 3.65 to 3.8 metres in height is impassable for articulated trucks and most commercial vehicles. When an accident happens here that would not have happened before those footpaths, the Cork side of Beara will be effectively cut off for all commercial traffic until the road is cleared. But prospects like these stemming from the creation of hazardous black spots, not to mention the direct possible impact of accidents they are structurally liable to cause, are less important concerns nowadays, apparently, than footpaths being built that nobody admitting asking for and rarely anyone uses. That is where road safety sits in the order of priorities.

The Congestion Charge

Among the measures listed in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 is a planned congestion charge for the city centre. It is worth pausing on what this represents. The congestion in Cork city centre has been manufactured, deliberately, systematically, and at public expense, through every instrument described in this article: road space reallocated away from cars, parking removed, bus stops redesigned to force buses into the live traffic lanes, junctions timed to maximise delay. The congestion did not arise despite these measures. It arose because of them. And now the same authority that produced it proposes to charge the people who paid for its creation, for the privilege of driving through it. This is not, in the scale of ETS2's financial implications, a significant sum. It is mentioned here not for its cost but for what it reveals about the character of those administering these policies. It is textbook insolence and it is documented.

5.3 Navigation Routing and Traffic Management as Further Instruments of the Same Direction

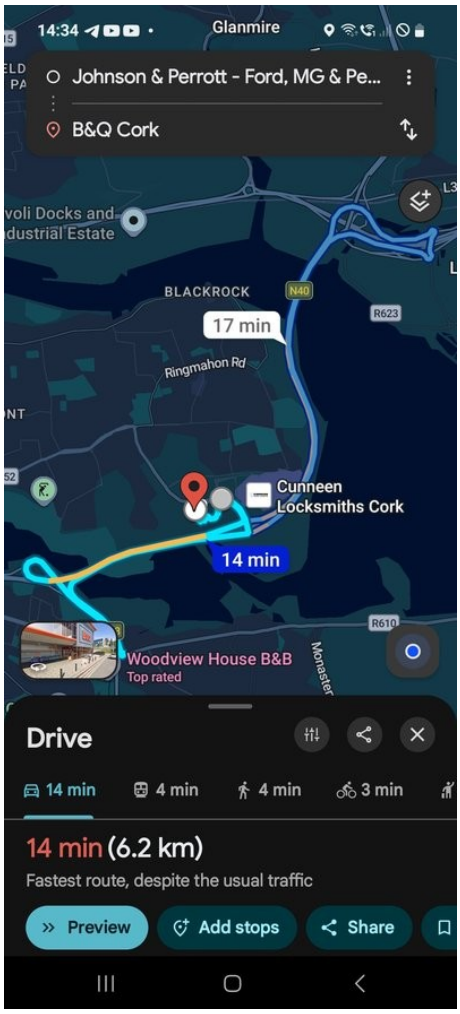
The following issue is not widely noticed because for it to be noticeable, certain conditions have to be met. The majority of people are not using navigation when they do not need it, and because of that, have no way of knowing this is happening at all.

Certain professions, however, taxi drivers, delivery drivers and others whose dispatching applications include navigation as a matter of course, are exposed to this continuously in the course of their working day. It has been noticed that in many instances navigation is offering and directing users by routes significantly longer than the shortest available. Residential areas and estates appear to be among those excluded, though other exclusions exist whose rationale is less clearly identifiable.

The resulting detours are in some instances significant, in others nothing short of bizarre, and in all cases directly contradictory to the stated objective of halving car journeys.

The following few examples out of many illustrate this.

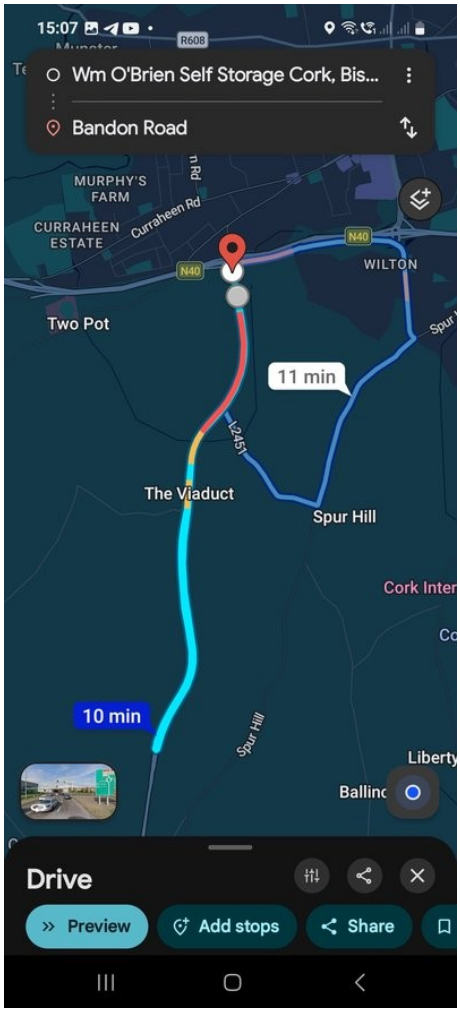
1. Mahon Point to B&Q Cork



A driver approaching B&Q Cork from Mahon Point who takes a wrong turn and allows navigation to recalculate is offered a route of 6.2km taking 14 minutes. B&Q Cork is approximately 800 metres from Mahon Point by direct approach. Jacob's Island estate, with a publicly accessible roundabout immediately adjacent to the point where the wrong turn occurred, does not appear as a waypoint or

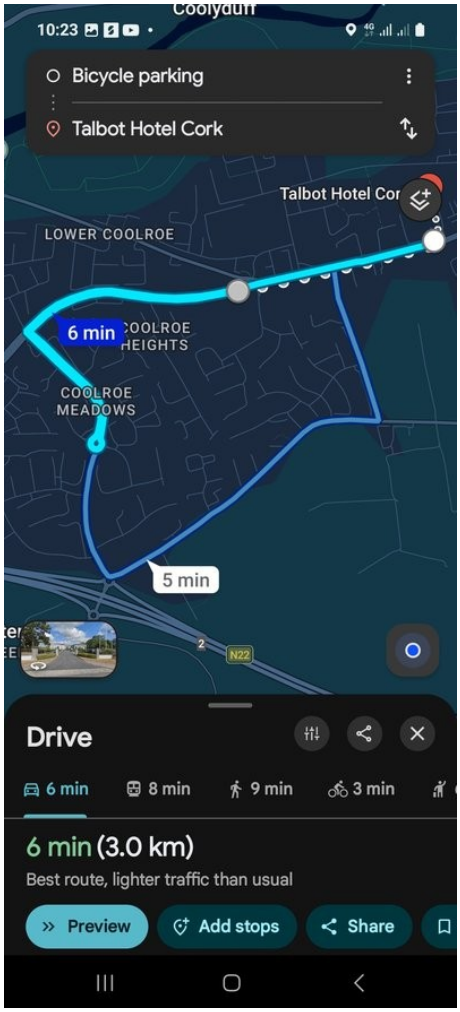
correction option. Drivers who have simply missed their turn, or in this case could find themselves in the wrong lane, are sent on a 6.2km detour, nearly eight times the shorter distance, rather than being directed to the obvious correction available 200 metres away. A pedestrian covers the destination in 4 minutes. A cyclist covers it in 3 minutes. The car is sent 6.2km. Navigation calls it the fastest route despite usual traffic.

2. Wm O'Brien Self Storage to Bandon Road



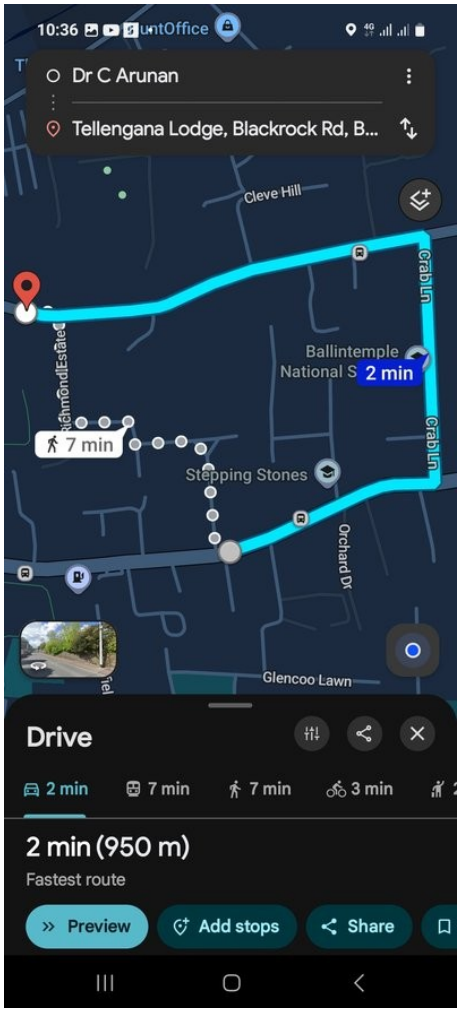
7.2km offered. The destination on Bandon Road is approximately 100 metres from the starting point. No short correction is offered at any point along either suggested route. Navigation takes the driver directly into congestion shown in red on the map. A petrol station immediately adjacent to the starting point, an obvious and natural turning point, is completely ignored. Both routes travel kilometres away from a destination that is effectively next door.

3. Maxol Petrol Station, Ballincollig, appearing as bicycle parking, to Talbot Hotel Ballincollig



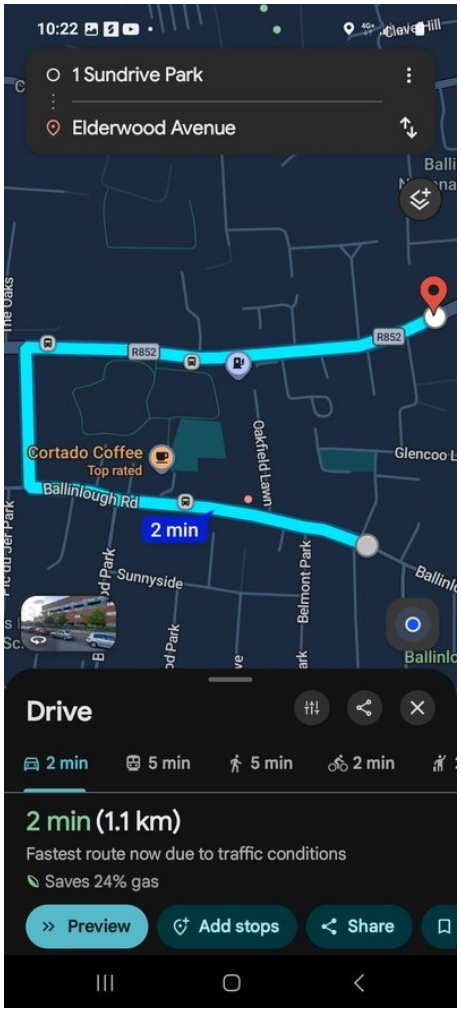
750 metres direct. 3km offered. Approximately 2.25km of unnecessary distance added. The starting point is a Maxol petrol station which appears in navigation as a bicycle parking location. A right turn from the petrol station would begin the most direct route to the destination. Navigation does not offer this. It routes left and proceeds on a 3km loop through Coolroe Heights and Coolroe Meadows. At no point along the suggested route is a correction offered that would reduce the journey. A cyclist covers the direct distance in 3 minutes. The car is sent four times that distance.

4. Corner of Boreenmanna Road and Clanrickarde Estate to corner of Blackrock Road and Richmond Estate



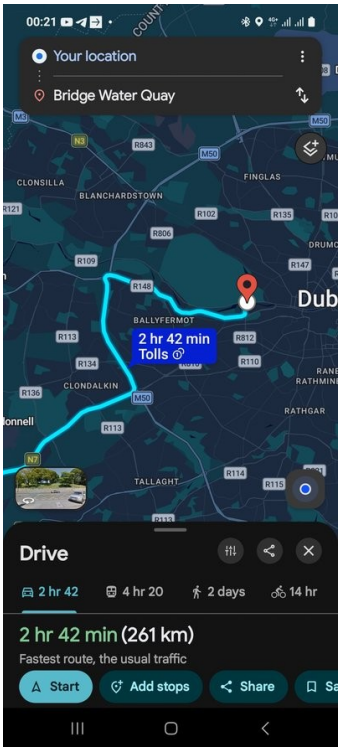
950 metres offered. Shorter route via Richmond Estate approximately 450 metres. Approximately 500 metres of unnecessary distance added. The shorter cut through Richmond Estate is a drivable residential road visible on the map. The car is sent twice the necessary distance to reach a destination that a pedestrian covers more directly in 7 minutes and a cyclist in 3 minutes.

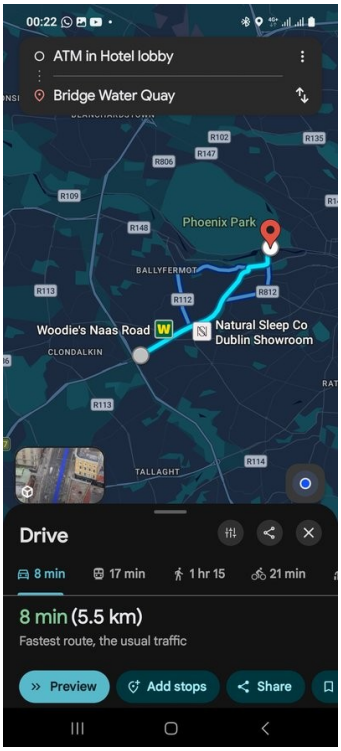
5. Sundrive Park to Elderwood Avenue

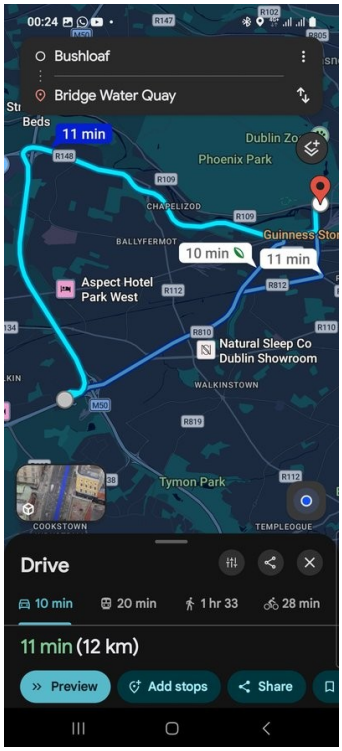


1.1km offered. Shorter route via Glencoo Park approximately 340 metres. Google's own note on this route states "Saves 24% gas" while sending the driver on a route more than three times the length of the alternative. Nobody is suggesting that small estates like Glencoo Park or Richmond Estate should become thoroughfares. The drivers who would use them are already in the area, not intercity traffic, not arriving from a different part of the city. A 340 metre shortcut through a residential estate for someone already there is not a traffic problem. It is, however, apparently a moral one — the shorter route should not be driven. And so it is not offered.

6. Cork to Dublin and the toll road question







A further observation, unrelated to residential exclusion, merits noting. Navigation from Cork to Bridgewater Quay in Dublin routes through a loop adding approximately 6km to the journey and passing through the M50 toll. When the same destination is navigated from a starting point closer to Dublin, both routes are offered, the shorter toll-free option among them. The difference in behaviour depending on where the journey originates cannot be explained by traffic conditions, as the screenshots were taken around midnight. Whether the longer route being preferentially offered to drivers coming from further away has anything to do with toll revenue is not something that can be established from these examples alone. The suspicion, however, is not unreasonable.

Observations and Conclusions

Cork is used throughout this article as a documented example because the material was gathered here. The pattern it illustrates is not Cork-specific. Every city and town in Ireland has its equivalent infrastructure decisions, its equivalent navigation anomalies, its equivalent planning documents pointing in the same direction. Cork is one example out of many, an exemplary one, but not an exceptional one.

The pattern across these examples is consistent across different parts of Cork, different times of day, and different journey types. In each case a shorter more direct route exists and is visible on the map. In each case it is not offered to the driver. The objection that routing drivers through residential streets would flood quiet neighbourhoods with through traffic does not apply here. The drivers affected are already in the area, they are not intercity traffic being redirected through someone's estate. They are local journeys, short distances, people who find themselves at a specific location and need to reach another nearby one. The blanket exclusion of residential routes cannot distinguish between these situations and so it applies the same rule to a driver crossing a city and a driver trying to reach the next street. Multiplied across every such misnavigated journey in every similar location across the country every day, what looks like a minor inconvenience in each individual instance is, in the face of the stated objective of halving car journeys, a direct and measurable contradiction and becomes a systematic addition to national fuel consumption instead, taxed by ETS2, extended by the routing, and presented by neither as having anything to do with the

other, and all of this while the same population is simultaneously being ushered and levered toward halving their car mileage.

This is not a claim that navigation providers have been specifically instructed to exclude residential streets. No such instruction has been found. However the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, particularly when the pattern strongly implies coordination, and access to the data that would confirm or deny it rests entirely with those who would be implicated if it did. What can be established is that the routing behaviour documented here is already entirely consistent with the policy direction of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040, which explicitly states objectives to remove through traffic from residential areas and from the city centre alike, funnelling all bypassing traffic onto longer routes by design. Whether the navigation exclusion of residential routes is a direct consequence of road classification decisions made in pursuit of those objectives, or an independent algorithmic behaviour that happens to produce the same effect, cannot be established from these examples alone. What can be established is that the effect is systematic and runs in one direction only. The result at every scale is the same: a significant portion of car journeys are made longer, through traffic management or navigation or both, and the fuel consumed on those longer journeys is what ETS2 is designed to make progressively more expensive.

The NTA's 2025 Walking and Cycling Index claimed strong public support for cycling infrastructure even where it reduces road space for cars, 86% in Waterford, 82% in Galway, 73% in Cork, 71% in Dublin. Cork, at 73%, sits among the less enthusiastic cities in that survey. That figure is still not credible when set against the scale of documented protests and on-site confrontations between residents and workers nationwide, and an election that reduced the party most associated with these policies from 12 seats to 1. It is equally difficult to reconcile with direct observation on the ground, where reactions to these interventions range from sustained annoyance to outright rage, and where those who express support are conspicuously absent from the locations where the work is actually happening. A survey conducted by the authority implementing the policy, asking an abstract question about cycling infrastructure in general rather than about specific schemes removing parking outside someone's home, is not a measure of consent. It is a measure of how a question can be framed to produce a desired answer. Any independent survey asking residents directly whether they support what is actually being done to their streets would produce a different result. A more revealing question still would be to ask the residents of the estates in the examples above what they would prefer if given the choice between an occasional driver taking a short cut through their street, and a permanent cycling lane installation combined with the removal of their parking. It is safe to assume the NTA would not be publishing those results.

To extend a significant portion of car journeys beyond their necessary distance, through traffic management or navigation or both, while simultaneously presenting the halving of car journeys as a social objective is not a policy contradiction, it is either an oxymoron or an admission that the real objective is something other than what is stated. Making driving progressively more expensive, more frustrating, more liable and more time-consuming until people abandon it regardless of whether any alternative exists, that appears to be the objective. It has simply never been stated as such. When a navigation journey from point A to point B amounts to little more than crossing from one end of a residential estate to the other, excluding that estate from the available route, standing alone, looks nothing short of idiotic. If replicated nationwide however, it looks like sabotage not only of the stated halving objective, but even of the primary purpose of navigation itself.

5.4 The Plan Behind the Pattern

A pattern is emerging that is worth naming explicitly. The problem, congestion, parking shortages, is substantially manufactured or exacerbated by the very infrastructure decisions described above. The state then acts as though it has nothing to do with it, while implying the solution: too many cars in limited space, or on roads generally, whatever suits the agenda, therefore people should logically conclude they ought to give them up. The official language is carefully chosen. 'Explicit goal is to address congestion by removing informal parking and set-down behaviour.' 'Create a pedestrian-focused streetscape.' In plain terms: what locals were always doing, pulling in, dropping

children, parking briefly, things they were and still should be perfectly entitled to do as law-abiding citizens paying the taxes that fund these very roads, without interference from the state those taxes support, was identified as a problem to be removed by design. The same goes for every delivery driver, taxi, postman and tradesperson whose work requires a brief stop, wherever these measures have made it impossible. The predictable chaos that follows is not a coincidence. It is the mechanism working as intended. The problem is created, its creators disclaim responsibility, and the solution, give up your car, because it is not practical if you cannot stop anywhere near where you need to go, is implied rather than stated, for now. Everyone can see who orchestrated that.

These observations are not inferences. The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040, published by the National Transport Authority, states these objectives explicitly: the deliberate downgrading of national routes to prioritise cycling over car traffic, the allocation of only one third of new road cross-sections to car use, a planned congestion charge, and the removal of what it calls ‘informal parking and set-down behaviour’ as a design objective. An entire chapter is dedicated to what the document calls Behavioural Change Programmes, described as ‘a highly personalised approach aimed at engaging a group of people, making them think about their travel choices.’ The document states its objective as the mitigation of ‘the need for car use and car ownership.’ The distinction matters. Fossil fuels brought mobility. Mobility brought prosperity. Removing mobility in the name of sustainability does not preserve prosperity, it eliminates it. Mitigation of the need for car ownership is, in plain terms, mitigation of the need for prosperity. Car restraint applies, it notes, not only where public transport exists but where it is ‘planned to be served’, the restraint precedes the alternative. The congestions are manufactured by the reallocation of road space away from cars and then cited as the justification for further reallocation. Roads are narrowed in the name of safety under the term ‘traffic calming’, a measure that increases the risk of incidents by reducing clearance, restricting visibility, and creating the conditions for the accidents it claims to prevent. The people inconvenienced and endangered by these interventions are the same people whose taxes fund them. The cost imposed on fossil fuels through ETS2 is described by its architects as a price signal, the language of choice for a mechanism designed to make behaviour change feel like market logic rather than policy coercion. Calling this a price signal would be generous. It is gaslighting at municipal scale, documented in an official strategy.

CMATS is not unique to Cork. Every city and region in Ireland has its equivalent, issued by the same National Transport Authority, built on the EU’s Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan framework, formally established by the European Commission’s New Urban Mobility Framework, COM(2021) 811, published December 2021. That document explicitly names the European Green Deal, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, and the Fit for 55 package, which includes ETS2, as its founding policy framework. CMATS is one local implementation of a continental strategy. The Green Deal is the body. ETS2, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, and the Urban Mobility Framework are its instruments. CMATS and every equivalent strategy issued to every city and region across Europe are how those instruments reach the road outside your door.

The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 shares its language, its objectives, and its underlying framework with a body of EU urban planning documentation that has been quietly shaping policy across Europe for years. The vocabulary is consistent and deliberate: ‘mitigation of the need for car use and car ownership,’ ‘car restraint in areas planned to be served by public transport,’ ‘behavioural change programmes’ targeting individual travel choices, ‘compact growth’ concentrated around transport nodes, walking and cycling as primary modes, public transport as the only legitimate longer range option. These phrases do not originate in Cork. They are drawn from the EU’s Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan guidelines and the European Commission’s Urban Mobility Framework COM(2021) 811, documents that any reader can look up directly. Those documents describe a specific urban model and, unlike CMATS, name it explicitly. It is called the fifteen minute city. CMATS uses the same language, pursues the same objectives, and is built on the same framework, without once using that name. The destination this vocabulary consistently points toward is everything within reach, no requirement to travel further, and progressively no practical means to do so even if desired. It was not conjured from nowhere. It is where this has been heading. It is also worth noting that the term ‘essential journey’ was allowed to become normalised through repeated unchallenged use during the pandemic. Once that framework is accepted, the demand to halve car journeys implicitly declares half of those journeys non-essential.

Since those journeys are our work, our families, our social lives and our freedoms, it follows that half of our lives would be considered non-essential too, and which half that would be, would be decided by the same category of people who have already demonstrated their willingness to interfere with how those lives are lived.

The cumulative effect of every instrument described in this article, making car ownership progressively more frustrating, costly, more liable and ultimately untenable, is entirely consistent with the stated intention of halving car journeys. The silence about that connection seems itself to be a part of the approach.

5.5 Manufactured Division

The architects of this agenda appear to consider the following a sophisticated tool of social pressure. It is not, it functions only on those unable to match and anticipate the patterns behind it. That tool is state-cultivated, encouraged and relentless environmental narcissism, deployed as a tool of social pressure, or ‘influence’ as they prefer to call it, manifesting across public roads in the form of ‘we care’ messaging on state vehicles, state-adjacent fleets and green industry related vehicles, implying that those who have not chosen to go electric as they are told do not, and that the vehicles carrying this message occupy the moral high ground.

This is being done in complete disregard of the documented fact that manufacturing an electric vehicle releases on average more than twice the carbon emissions of a comparable combustion engine car before it reaches the showroom, not a marginal difference, but a gap measured in tonnes. Manufacturing an electric vehicle also uses 50% more water than a comparable combustion engine car. When the battery reaches end of life, typically within 8 to 12 years, it becomes hazardous e-waste liable to leach toxic compounds into soil or cause fires that are extremely difficult to control. With tens of millions of electric vehicles already on global roads and hundreds of millions projected by 2030, each carrying a battery weighing approximately 450kg, the disposal challenge ahead is on a scale that has no precedent and for which, contrary to combustion engine cars, no adequate infrastructure currently exists. The International Energy Agency, one of the principal advocates of the electric transition, describes its own battery recycling sector as nascent, meaning it barely exists yet, with no credible pathway to the scale that would be required. A combustion engine car at the end of its life is dismantled and largely recycled, glass, rubber, metal and components reused or resold. Consequently, the vehicle proclaiming environmental virtue arrived on a significantly larger carbon debt than the one it replaced and leaves behind a disposal problem of a scale its architects appear not to have considered.

That is just by the way, the environmental narcissism described above does not stop at messaging. One of many further sub-instruments of this approach is, for instance, the green flash registration plate, introduced in Ireland from July 2025, a green vertical stripe on the right-hand side of the plate for zero-emission vehicles. Its stated purpose is social influence, the system’s own documentation cites research showing that visible green choices encourage others to follow. For those who choose it consciously it is virtue signalling by design. For those who find it on their new car without having actively requested it, issued as standard by dealerships, requiring active refusal rather than active choice, it achieves the same social effect without the driver’s awareness, making that driver a tool of this propaganda even if they would actively object to everything described above, had they a voice in the matter. In practice there are more than two groups, but the group of those who might be aggravated by this is never surveyed, as was established earlier. The infrastructure to attach practical privileges to this visible distinction already exists, as demonstrated by the UK where green plate holders have access to bus lanes in certain areas. Whether something similar follows in Ireland is a policy decision not yet announced, but entirely consistent with everything else examined in this article. Should that happen, it would introduce formal segregation on public roads between those who have chosen to go electric as they are told and those who have not, with consequences progressively attached to that distinction.

That it sets people against each other is not an unintended consequence. It is the mechanism.

The division does not require a formal policy decision to already be operational. It is visible every day on roads across the country. Cyclists and motorists already resent each other, cyclists implicitly encouraged toward increasingly assertive behaviour by the near-total visible absence of enforcement or prosecution for them, equally applicable to pedestrians. That asymmetry is not incidental, it is built into the law. Since November 2019, close overtaking of a cyclist is, rightly, labelled a specific offence carrying a €120 fine and three penalty points for the motorist. Therefore, it would be only just if an equivalent specific offence existed for cyclists. No equivalent specific offence exists imposing any duty of care on cyclists toward motorists. A driver who passes too close is liable and traceable. A cyclist who squeezes through gaps, holds up traffic, or behaves assertively toward drivers, endangering himself while making drivers liable, operates with effective impunity, helmet camera rolling, in the knowledge that the asymmetry is structural and deliberate. The same applies to pedestrians: under the Rules of the Road, a driver with a green light cannot even move if a pedestrian has commenced crossing, regardless of whether that pedestrian is crossing against a red signal. The pedestrian commits an offence by crossing on red. The driver has to sit and wait quietly, without recourse and without the right to object, because he is identifiable, traceable and liable. The pedestrian, having committed the offence, can simply disappear. Should the driver sound the horn or gesture, he risks being taken on by the pedestrian, the law, or both, while the pedestrian simply walks away, whatever he does. This is not a blanket statement, a significant cohort of cyclists and the majority of pedestrians conduct themselves reasonably. But a shift in atmosphere is observable, and there is a growing cohort of those who do not, and for drivers there is no recourse, because both of these groups, prioritised as per CMATS, can behave as they choose and simply disappear, while the driver is always identifiable, traceable and liable.

The atmosphere in which this dynamic operates has been actively cultivated. For instance, professional drivers, the most skilled and experienced road users on any road, people who individually prevent dozens of accidents every week by reading traffic and anticipating what others will do, are required under the Certificate of Professional Competence to sit through road safety modules built around statistics of road deaths. Central to that training is the EU Commission's Road Traffic Fatalities Collision Matrix, published annually, which shows how many people from each road user category died in collisions with each other category across the EU. The 2024 matrix, reproduced below, recorded 19,954 road deaths across the EU. What it does not contain, anywhere in its rows, columns, or footnotes, is any attribution of fault or liability. It shows who died. Even if every pedestrian in that matrix had been intoxicated and walked into traffic, and statistically, some must have, that information is not considered relevant enough to mention, because its inclusion would invalidate the intended message. The matrix is not an analysis of causation, as it should be given the CPC's declared purpose. It is a tool of the narrative, and everyone processed through it, including its instructors, becomes or is expected to become a potential extension of that narrative.

ROAD TRAFFIC FATALITIES IN THE EU IN 2024

by road user and (other) 'main vehicle' involved in the crash

IN A COLLISION WITH...

FATALITIES	Pedestrian	e-scooter	Bicycle	Moped	Motorbike	Car	Lorry (<3.5t)	Heavy goods vehicle (>3.5t)	Bus or coach	Other vehicle / unknown	No other vehicle involved	TOTAL
Pedestrians	-	10	18	12	96	2302	414	391	127	190	-	3560
e-scooter riders	1	1	2	0	0	57	6	8	4	3	65	148
Cyclists	9	0	52	6	46	817	122	175	28	66	498	1819
Moped riders	2	0	1	2	12	204	43	32	8	26	148	478
Motorcyclists	16	0	7	7	132	1583	232	205	38	119	1345	3684
Car occupants	16	1	13	5	17	2675	548	1284	147	201	5805	8712
Lorry (<3.5t) occupants	0	0	2	0	1	98	68	172	15	20	245	621
Heavy goods vehicle (>3.5t) occupants	0	0	0	0	0	49	13	152	2	11	138	365
Bus or coach occupants	1	0	0	0	1	7	4	3	1	7	36	60
Other/unknown	1	0	0	0	5	136	32	37	7	28	261	507
TOTAL	46	12	95	32	310	7928	1482	2459	377	671	6542	19954

https://transport.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-03/Collision_Matrix_2024.png

Note: The European Commission's own publication of this document does not permit direct screenshot or download. The image above was obtained by photographing a screen display of the document, which accounts for the image quality.

Consequently, a road-raging road user classified as vulnerable is now a more common sight than a raging motorist, the word 'vulnerable' carrying an irony worth noting, given that it is the driver who has been made legally vulnerable by the enforcement asymmetry described above.

The restricted road space being created across urban areas adds a further dimension, more potential for conflict at every junction, every parking space, every pinch point. The system that created those restrictions stands back and calls the resulting friction a natural consequence of too many cars in too little space. And should the green flash plate eventually unlock bus lane access or other privileges, it will add a formal dimension to what is already an informal reality: those who have made or been issued with the approved choice being prioritised over those who have not, with every day on the road a visible reminder of which category they fall into. Every cyclist indignant at a motorist stopped in a cycling lane because there is nowhere else to stop, every pedestrian holding up traffic because he can, every motorist taking it out on a fellow driver for getting stuck in one of the deliberately created bottlenecks, all are becoming tools of this pernicious mechanism without being aware that they are being used as such. The resentment this produces between road users is not a side effect. It is the intended condition. That social cohesion does not feature as a concern is confirmed by the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 itself, which, notably, labels this kind of friction as "social influence", a deliberate tool of behavioural change.

5.6 Rural Ireland — Quietly Steered to Fade as a Responsible Choice

Rural dwellers' exposure to the tactics described above is and will be less prominent, limited to their journeys to work, business and shopping in towns and cities, and of course to the black spots created under the pretexts as described earlier. What awaits them further down the road is, however, more insidious still.

That insidious reality is this: their dependence on affordable mobility, which is implicitly targeted by ETS2 and explicitly by the EU Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and its surrounding and concurrent architecture, enthusiastically adopted and exceeded by the Irish government, is total and not optional. Their very existence is incompatible with the halving car journeys demand and the endpoint of these policies.

Halving car journeys applies to all cars, electric ones included. So the stated plan of electrification of private transport does not change it. Even if it did, the grid cannot support electrification at the required scale, the charging infrastructure does not exist, and the motor industry has reported the one million EV target for 2030 is no longer achievable. The replacement is not coming. ETS2 is set to come regardless. In its early stages it would function as an additional tax on fuel. As it tightens, fossil fuels would become unaffordable, the alternative being pushed cannot materialise, and everything that depends on the car, which in rural Ireland is everything, would have no choice but to go with it. The public has been told none of this.

What made rural Ireland what it is today was not electrification. It was fossil fuels. The mobility they enabled transformed dispersed rural settlement from a marginal existence into a viable modern way of life. The numbers tell the story plainly. In 1911, farming still accounted for 55% of occupied men in rural Ireland, the rural population was almost entirely tied to the land itself. Today Ireland's rural population stands at approximately 1.82 million, the vast majority of whom are not farmers. They are there, working, raising families, running businesses, accessing services, because the car made it possible to be there doing something other than working the land. That population did not exist before the car. It cannot exist without it.

Should the enabling condition be removed, what follows would not be a return to what came before. It would be something worse. The population that is there now was never sustained by what was

there before the car arrived. Rural Ireland before affordable mobility for everyone could support only those who worked it. Rural Ireland after affordable mobility goes, would hardly support even those few who still work the land, let alone those who merely live in it.

ETS2 will not announce this. It would begin as a manageable nuisance, like another USC, or TV licence, or any of those assorted impositions with fancy labels designed to sound just and reasonable, fuel more expensive, the increase absorbed, life continuing. Then tighter. Then tighter again. The annual cap is not planned to pause. Any review points that exist concern price mechanisms, not the direction this is heading to, and are designed to keep public resistance below the level that would stop it. The pressure is planned to simply increase, year on year, by design. Different households would feel it differently, depending on how far they drive, how often, how dependent their daily lives are on the car, and how much disposable income they have to absorb before something has to give. The well-off would stretch further and longer. Those living cheque to cheque would reach the limit sooner. Rural people tend toward resilience, that is partly why they are there, and many would manage longer than expected. But the direction would be the same for all of them. For a rural couple approved for a mortgage on the strength of two jobs dependent on affordable mobility, interference with their mobility is interference with their capacity to repay that mortgage, and with everything that stands or falls with it. Therefore, the green transition the EU Green Deal pursues and ETS2 is meant to be the lever of, might be their transition out of their house and into poverty.

As households would begin to reduce movement because they would have to, which is precisely what ETS2 implicitly aims for, and what the EU Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy explicitly calls for, the local economy that depended on that movement would contract. This is not a new pattern. It is how rural decline has always worked, across Ireland and across Europe. Businesses would close. Services would withdraw. Each departure would make the area less viable for those who remain, which would accelerate the next wave. This would not be a managed transition. It would be a cascade. And it would not stop at a new equilibrium, it would stop when the conditions that sustained the current population no longer exist.

And this would not be limited to rural Ireland. For instance, Ireland's motor industry directly employs over 40,000 people generating €13.8 billion a year. Half the cars means less than half the sales, servicing, parts, insurance, financing and testing that sustain those numbers. Ireland's tourism sector employs approximately 228,800 people generating over €6 billion in foreign earnings annually, with 32% of all international visitors hiring a car and a regional reach that depends entirely on visitors being able to move around the country freely. Half the cars means half of them would not. The cascade would run through the entire economy, and the ripples it would create would extend further than the narrow-minded architects of these policies can possibly imagine, judging by the complete absence of any provision for this mathematically certain outcome. Therefore they would not be able to contain it. The full secondary, tertiary and further order economic impacts of these policies would be a subject worthy of a critical study of their own.

It bears repeating: the halving target applies to electric cars equally. Switching to an EV would not exempt a rural household from the demand to halve its journeys. For those whose journeys cannot be halved, no vehicle technology changes that.

Cars would, nevertheless, have to be kept to the bitter end, because they would still be needed until the very last. How else would their depleted and impoverished owners reach their assigned destinations, destinations which, by design, would not tolerate cars.

Ireland's rural settlement pattern is among the most dispersed in Europe, possibly the most. Where most European countries have rural populations clustered in villages, Ireland has the one-off house, scattered across the landscape, set back from the road, each household an island. This pattern is historically rooted. The village structure was largely destroyed during the plantations era and never rebuilt. What replaced it was dispersed settlement, which the car then made viable at modern scale. That settlement pattern has its roots in colonial history. It is worth noting the irony that another distant administration, with its domestic collaborators more than willing to go further than asked, is now planning to reshape it again like a mere side effect of progress, this time in the name of sustainability, with equally little regard for what the Irish themselves might prefer or what

their particular conditions require. No provision has been made for this in ETS2 or in any of the planning documents that implement it. The same instrument is being applied uniformly across Ireland, France, Germany and everywhere else, a blanket solution that takes no account of the fact that losing car access in rural Ireland means something categorically different from losing it in rural Burgundy or Bavaria.

Dispersed rural housing in Ireland is not a problem to be done away with, regardless of how much those of that persuasion might choose to frame it as such. It is a cherished feature of resilience and cultural heritage, alongside the Irish fireplace and a particular way of life, and as such it deserves protection, not the subversion and intended elimination it is currently being subjected to. This framing has already surfaced in public discourse, see full study, section 2.2.4.

https://archive.org/details/ets-2-ireland-or-what-the-public-was-never-told_202608

The Irish earned their independence. With it came the right to have policies shaped to their own conditions. What is being imposed instead is a continental framework designed for a settlement pattern that does not exist here, with consequences more profound than anywhere else it is being applied, administered by politicians who are supposed to be their own but show no sign of caring about the difference. On these grounds, Ireland should demand exemption from the halving car journeys demand. If that exemption is not granted, it should terminate its participation unilaterally. And if its present political representation is not willing to do either, then for rural Ireland to survive as we know it, that representation needs to be replaced by someone who will.

Calling for unilateral termination, and not only of this one policy, might strike some as radical, but it is not. It is the only logically consistent conclusion available. A population was signed into what is basically a financial liability under a progressively tightening mechanism, without being told what it was, without debate, without consent, by a government whose most ardent advocate for the programme, the Green Party, entrenched these policies in law before being voted out of office precisely because of them. This should not be even legally possible. The people had spoken. By any reasonable democratic standard, that should have been the end of it. That chain of facts is not in dispute, therefore to terminate these arrangements is not extreme. It’s only logical and the minimum reasonable response. The extreme position is the one that insists the arrangement should continue regardless, and the fact that the same people who signed us into this also embedded our compliance with it into national law does not make it any less fundamentally wrong and, as such, demanding to be scrapped.

5.7 Conclusion

If an individual were assigned a task requiring half the journeys while simultaneously being routed unnecessary extra distance by somebody in a position of authority over them, that would be recognised immediately as an impossible and abusive instruction, which is the definition of bullying, with clear legal recourse available. The same goes if one were asked and manipulated into doing something to one’s own detriment. When the same logic is applied to an entire population through coordinated policy and infrastructure decisions, its architects present it as responsible governance. It is not even expected to be objected to, because it is a green transition to sustainability.

The nation, however, has a constitution and a democratic mandate. An obligation imposed without consent, without the means to meet it, and to the measurable detriment of those required to fulfil it, by those who know the means do not exist and in many aspects cannot exist, is not a legitimate obligation. It is institutionalised bullying at national scale. It should be as legally objectionable as it is morally unacceptable.

The EU mandates emissions reductions, a mandate that could itself be objected to or negotiated, as other member states have done. It does not mandate road narrowing, bus stop redesign, cycling lane installation, or any specific infrastructure intervention. Those are Irish government choices, implemented through CMATS and equivalent strategies, using the EU Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan framework, a non-binding recommendation the Commission itself chose not to make mandatory, as the template. That would require a government willing to represent its own people

rather than one engaged in gaslighting them into acceptance of an agenda they were never asked to approve, while presenting its own choices as EU obligation it had no hand in shaping.

CAP23, the plan that set the car journey reduction targets and embedded the OECD behavioural change framework into Irish transport policy, was signed off at the final Cabinet meeting of December 2022 by all three coalition partners, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party. Every minister at that Cabinet table put their name to it. Tánaiste Micheál Martin described it at the time as a blueprint for radical change in our country. Taoiseach Leo Varadkar stood alongside him at its launch. Its transport chapter was authored by Eamon Ryan, Green Party Minister for Transport, who championed it specifically, but the collective ownership was unambiguous. At the subsequent general election, the Green Party was reduced from 12 seats to 1. The other two parties that signed the same plan are still in government, continuing its implementation through the same civil service and agencies, the NTA, local authorities and Transport Infrastructure Ireland, as if the democratic verdict had not been delivered. That is not compliance with a mandate. That is continuation of a programme whose political authors were removed from office by the people it was being imposed upon.

None of this happened by accident, nor does it bear the hallmarks of mere incompetence. What personality types this pattern of governance is symptomatic of, and what these combined trademarks are signs of, has a name. The simultaneous deployment of financial coercion, infrastructural sabotage, social manipulation, and manufactured division, each instrument maintained in apparent separation from the others, each deniable in isolation, all pointing in the same direction, is the operating signature of what psychology identifies as the dark triad: the convergence of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and an absence of conscience. The evidence examined in this article is consistent with all three.

And then there is this. Every policy examined in this article, every target, every instrument of financial coercion and infrastructural pressure, was designed and justified on climate projections that the IPCC body responsible for producing them has now officially declared implausible. The worst case scenario, RCP8.5, which dominated climate research, policy and headlines for the better part of two decades and on which the urgency behind all of this rests, was formally eliminated in April 2026. This was the same scenario communicated to the Irish public as an unrelenting message that climate catastrophe was imminent and that they, defined under the polluter pays principle written into Irish carbon tax policy as polluters for heating their homes and driving their cars, had to pay for it. When it was eliminated, Irish media, in common with most English language outlets, gave it virtually no coverage. It is safe to observe that a system appears to be firmly in place in Ireland that has the capacity to ignore any signal, election results included, while remaining fully committed to managing its own population through price signals, as per the ETS2 design, judging by everything documented in this article and the complete silence on this most recent development.

A common public assumption that this is simply about electrifying cars and will stop if that proves too difficult is, judging by all of the above, incorrect. ETS2 would continue tightening regardless of whether any alternative exists. The destination this all points toward has already been named and packaged. It is the fifteen minute city, everything within reach, no need to travel further, and progressively no practical means to do so even if desired. It was not arrived at by accident. It is the plan, named, funded and mapped across European cities by EU bodies. And the tools examined in this article are how it is being built, one filled-in bus bay, one yellow box junction, one at a time, while the nation remains, to the best of this study's knowledge, virtually unaware that any of it is connected.

Final Remarks

This article and the study it is part of are aiming to change that, and thus, hopefully, the course of what is unfolding.

https://archive.org/details/ets-2-ireland-or-what-the-public-was-never-told_202608

What these policies are collectively intending to do to cars and their owners can, in layman's terms, be summarised as follows. By removing road margins, stopping becomes increasingly impossible, making the car itself appear impractical. By removing parking, keeping a car becomes increasingly harder and driving it somewhere increasingly pointless. By narrowing roads and impeding the flow, driving becomes frustrating and infuriating. By reducing clearance, it becomes liable. Each measure another pull toward the proverbial door. And for those still holding the frame, ETS2 is planned to be a further sustainable pushkick, more thorough every year, to ensure the right and responsible "choice" will be made.

The answer to the question posed at the outset, whether half the journeys or half the cars, is that it intends to be both. From what has been established, it appears to be half as many cars, driven half as much, at least, all electric, and for all, no matter what.

Should this proceed as intended and without sufficient resistance, it would not be a green utopia. What is being done is taking apart a system that has demonstrably worked and continues to do so, and replacing it with something imaginary, which can already be seen failing in advance. If the economy contracts, and it would have to as mobility and the activity it enables are withdrawn, the costs would be immediate, measurable and severe for most, while the benefits would remain unmeasurable, hypothetical, and projected decades into the future by the same models that failed to predict the consequences described in this article, and have since been declared implausible by the IPCC, the body that produced them, without either fact being mentioned anywhere in Irish public discourse.

Yet this is still going ahead in spite of all circumstances that made it even possible having changed. Most importantly, it would not have even started if the Green Party, despite receiving only 7.1% of the vote in the 2020 election, had not unexpectedly found itself in a position of unearned significant influence, because Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael chose to form a coalition with it rather than with Sinn Féin, which had won the largest share of first preference votes. In order to form a government without Sinn Féin, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael threw the entire population to the Green Party, which went on a green crusade that has been going on ever since, in spite of its instigators being voted out.

This fact alone should have put Climate Action Plan 23 on hold immediately and subjected it to thorough reassessment, if Ireland wishes to call itself a democracy.

Combined with the disproportionality of these measures, their lives-changing, measurable imposition against impacts that remain unmeasurable, and their grave emergency resilience implications with potential for casualties, documented in Parts 15 and 13 of the full study respectively, the near total public unawareness of the full magnitude of what is planned, the consequent absence of any informed public agreement, and the most recent development of the IPCC declaring implausible the catastrophising scenario on which all of this was built, a fact the public is being kept in the dark about, any continuation of this programme is morally illegitimate.

The fifteen minute city, in principle on its own, would have certain merit. As a way of life chosen and built by those who want it, at their own expense, it could be a commendable alternative concept. What is being pursued instead is something categorically different, a clandestine push toward it at the expense of everyone, openly referenced in planning documents, as any debunker would be quick to point out, while being carefully omitted from the transport strategies and mobility policies that are building it, instrument by instrument, which is precisely the point. Nevertheless, once there, one would not be technically prohibited from traveling anywhere. Nor would one be technically prohibited from doing so by car. There would just be no affordable fuel, limited places to stop, limited places to park, a car that is liable, and roads designed to make the journey miserable. For everything else, conveniently, it would all be within fifteen minute reach, so if designed by those same brilliant mindsets as the transition to it, which is the subject matter of this article, how would one justify the need to travel. If the architects of this policy have their way, the vast majority would eventually have to embrace life in places like that to live their low impact sustainable lives, those who were against equally as those who were for it, with the possible exception of those classified as vitally useful to the architects themselves. That means the majority of those who supported it, who are, judging by every parameter examined in this study, a clear minority, may find themselves,

once they have served their purpose, forced to live in close proximity with all those who were against it and forced there as well.

None of this will be reversed voluntarily by the system that put it in place. The school books are printed and everything else is ready to go or already going. The curriculum designed to embed these values has been in third level education for years. It has now percolated into Irish secondary schools from September 2025, so that by the time these students vote, the assumptions embedded here will feel like common sense, while the system has consistently implied that those who question it on the basis of lived experience and common sense are uninformed and uneducated, regardless of the evidence they bring. The industry that profits from the transition is established and growing, as documented in Part 6 of the full study. The policies are in motion. The near total absence of any public information about ETS2 and what it means for every household in Ireland, combined with the near total media blackout of the IPCC's April 2026 elimination of the catastrophising scenario that should have been paradigm changing news on every front page, are not coincidences. They are proof that this is going ahead regardless of anything. The money making apparatus is in place, the ideology is embedded, and facts that contradict the narrative will simply not be reported. If mobility and freedom as we know them are to survive for our children and grandchildren, this has to be actively opposed. The system will not do it on its own.

Nevertheless, this article and the study it is part of are not aiming to create a narrative of us versus them, unlike ETS2 and the policies surrounding it, which demonstrably do. They are aiming to give a heads up to those who would not believe that something of this magnitude might be attempted to be imposed on them without even the courtesy of being told. Equally, they are aiming to give a heads up to those who are helping ETS2 progress, whether out of misguided good intention, for profit, or both. It might be advisable to step back and take a thorough look at what is being done to their people, and to themselves, what for, and where this is heading. Ideal would be if everyone yet unaware of the connections between what is described here and its potential consequences could have a major epiphany.

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